

12 April 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: George A. Carver, Jr.

SUBJECT : Le Duan's Party Background

In general, Le Duan's early activities can be traced as follows:

1930 - 45

1. In 1931 Le Duan was a member of the Bac Bo (Tonkin) Regional Committee; he was jailed from 1931-36; a year later in 1937 he became Secretary of the Trung Bo (Central Vietnam) Regional Committee; in 1938 or '39 he became a member of the Standing Bureau, i. e. Politburo, of the Party Central Committee. Official Party histories relate that in November 1939 he attended the sixth Central Committee plenum held in Saigon. (The Party's Secretary General at that time was Nguyen Van Cu.) In 1940 many Party leaders located in the South were arrested by the French; Le Duan was again imprisoned on Con Son Island and Nguyen Van Cu was executed in 1941. In the meanwhile, the Central Committee had relocated itself from Nam Bo to Bac Bo. At the 7th plenum in November 1940, the Central Committee was reorganized and Truong Chinh named provisional Secretary General. At the 8th plenum in May 1941, which was attended by Ho Chi Minh, Truong Chinh was named permanent Secretary General.

1945 - 57

2. Le Duan, together with "Muoi Cuc," Vo Chi Cong, Pham Hung, Ton Duc Thang and others, escaped from Con Son prison in August 1945. After his escape from Con Son, he became Secretary of the Nam Bo Regional Committee and Secretary of the "Central Committee Representation for South Vietnam" -- an organization that appears similar, if not identical, to

COSVN which surfaced in 1951. Le Duan attended the southern Party organization conference in October 1945 in the My Tho area. There were also a few public references in 1951 to Le Duan's activities in Nam Bo. The evidence from agent reporting indicates that Le Duan remained in the South until mid-1957. A number of clandestine reports have Le Duan attending meetings in various southern locations in 1955, 1956 and up to mid-1957. It is possible, however, that Le Duan may have been away from his duty station in Nam Bo at various times during the 1945-57 period. He may have attended the February 1951 Second Party Congress in Bac Bo, where his status as Central Committee/Politburo member was affirmed.

3. In the fall of 1957 DRV media began reporting on Le Duan's presence and activities in North Vietnam. In late October and early November 1957, he, for example, went to Moscow to attend the 40th anniversary celebration of the Bolshevik Revolution.



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